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ABSTRACT

The job satisfaction and organizational commitment of rehabilitation counselors working in public rehabilitation agencies in Vermont are the focus of this study. Participants were 22 rehabilitation counselor survey respondents whose agencies agreed to take part in the study. A total of 40 surveys were mailed. Job satisfaction was measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, though the sample size was too small to conduct extensive data analysis. The three components of organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance) were examined using the Organizational Commitment Scales. Potential predictor variables examined were: (1) years of service; (2) age; (3) education level; (4) Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) status; (5) conscientiousness; (6) initiative; (7) cooperation; and (8) attendance/punctuality. Vermont's rehabilitation counselors showed patterns of job satisfaction and organizational commitment similar to rehabilitation counselors in the larger, national sample. The state's public rehabilitation agency is encouraged to develop ways of rewarding those counselor behaviors (conscientiousness, initiative, and cooperation) which are most predictive of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment. Contains two appendices: (1) Job Satisfaction Items and (2) Organizational Commitment Items. (JBJ)

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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG STATE AGENCY REHABILITATION COUNSELORS: Vermont

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG STATE AGENCY REHABILITATION COUNSELORS: VERMONT

This study examined the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of rehabilitation counselors working in public (state/federal) in Vermont. Because of the small population size, general (n = 36) and blind (n = 4) responses are combined.

Demographic Information

Twenty-two (22) out of 40 (40) surveys were returned. The following demographic questions were asked:

1. How long had the counselors worked with their agency?
2. How old were the counselors?
3. Did the counselors have master's or bachelor's degrees?
4. Were the counselors Certified Rehabilitation Counselors?

The counselors ranged in years worked as a counselor in Vermont from 8 months to 15 years, with a mean of 7.65 years. They ranged in age from 35 to 58 years with a mean age of 44.14. Eleven (11) of the counselors had master's degrees or higher while ten (10) reported having bachelor's degrees. One (1) counselor did not indicate educational attainment. Three (3) counselors reported that they were Certified Rehabilitation Counselors while nineteen (19) said they were not.

I. JOB SATISFACTION

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, (1967) was used to measure job satisfaction. Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr (1982) describe the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire as a sound measure of overall job satisfaction. This questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale with the following values:

1 = Very dissatisfied
2 = Dissatisfied
3 = I cannot decide whether I am satisfied or not
4 = Satisfied
5 = Very satisfied

A copy of the items can be found in Appendix A. Upon the completion of data collection, two items were deleted from the instrument: (a) being able to do things that do not go against my decisons, and (b) the chance to tell people what to do. Item a was deleted because the majority of respondents felt it was too ambiguously worded. Item b was deleted because the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that their jobs did not provide opportunities for supervision and that, when working with clients, it was not part of their responsibilities/philosophy to "tell others what to do." With the deletion of these items, possible scores could range from 18-90. Using Cronbach's Alpha, a new reliability coefficient was calculated. Reliability was found to be .87.

The range of scores from Vermont's counselors was from 33-84 with a mean of 68.14 and a standard deviation of 10.03. This compares with a national sample mean of 66.86 and a standard deviation of 10.90.

Data Analysis

The sample size was too small to conduct data analysis other than ranges, means, and standard deviations.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment refers to the dedication that employees feel toward the organizations for which they work. It has been defined as "the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974, p. 604). It also has been related to the energy that employees expend on behalf of the organizations for which they work.

Meyer & Allen (1991) conceptualized organizational commitment as having three components: (a) affective, (b) normative, and (c) continuance. Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment that an individual has for the organization in which he or she works. Normative commitment refers to the individual's attachment to an organization because of values relating to loyalty. Continuance commitment refers, primarily, to an individual's attachment to the organization for which he or she works because the costs of leaving the organization would be too high. Workers operating from an affective model of commitment expend energy on behalf of the organization because they *want* to. Workers operating from a normative model of commitment expend energy on behalf of the organization because the believe they *should*. Persons in the continuance model expend energy on behalf of their organizations because they feel they *have* to.

Affective, normative, and continuance commitment can occur simultaneously, although they are individual constructs (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). The effects of each component on job performance, however, may differ. Meyer et al. (1989) stated that, when the primary commitment to an organization is affective, the organization may benefit in terms of "superior" performance. Normative commitment may also be positively reflected in work performance. When the primary commitment is continuance, relatively poor performance may be evident.

The Organizational Commitment Scales developed by Allen and Meyer (1989) was used to measure affective, normative, and continuance commitment in this study. Items can be found in Appendix B. Previous research using these scales has shown relative independence among the three components of organizational commitment, although a relationship may exist between affective and normative commitment. From a current sample of over 2,000 rehabilitation counselors, the following correlations were found:

	Affective	Normative	Continuance
Affective	1.00	.50**	.05
Normative	.50**	1.00	.06
Continuance	.05	.06	1.00

**p< .01

A significant relationship was found between affective and normative commitment. The magnitude of this relationship, however, is not sufficient to conclude that they are measuring the same construct. Previous researchers using these scales have found reliability coefficients ranging from .74 to .89 (Affective), .69 to .84 (Continuance), and .69 to .79 (Normative). In the current study, the following reliability coefficients were found: Affective (.66); Continuance (.75); Normative (.70). The following research question was answered:

What are the affective, normative, and continuance commitment levels of state agency rehabilitation counselors in Vermont?

For each area of commitment, scores on this instrument can range from 8-56. The following scores were obtained:

Affective Commitment	Mean = 33.22	SD = 7.98	n = 21
Normative Commitment	Mean = 25.23	SD = 7.16	n = 22
Continuance Commitment	Mean = 37.59	SD = 7.55	n = 22

Vermont's public rehabilitation counselors were highest in continuance (have to) commitment followed, respectively, by affective and normative commitment. In the national sample, state agency counselors' highest level of commitment was continuance. These were followed by affective and normative commitment.

DISCUSSION

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment among public-rehabilitation counselors may ultimately be reflected in the quality of services provided to persons with disabilities. Public (state/federal) agencies employing rehabilitation counselors should pay attention to those variables which are predictive of both job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Rehabilitation counselors in Vermont did not differ substantially in their job satisfaction than did counselors in the national sample. Further, their levels of organizational commitment followed the same pattern as in the national sample. The overall patterns of commitment in Vermont raise some concerns. As a group, the counselors operated primarily from the continuance component of commitment. While it is important for agencies to provide incentives through work benefits (i.e., insurance, retirement, etc.), counselors operating primarily from a continuance model may have less productivity than those operating primarily from an affective or normative perspective. Again, public rehabilitation agencies need to emphasize (and reward) those behaviors that positively relate to affective and normative commitment.

From the national sample, work behaviors appear to be most important to rehabilitation counselors'job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment. Public rehabilitation agencies wishing to enhance the job satisfaction and, in particular, affective commitment of its counselors are advised to consider ways to reward those behaviors which reflect conscientiousness, initiative, and cooperation. Offering rewards (e.g., in the form of positive verbal reinforcement or letters to the counselor from administrators) for correct and complete case documentation, attention

to details, and evidence of quality case services might serve to enhance satisfaction and emotional commitment. While these behaviors will typically lead to successful case closures, attention focused exclusively on outcome (i.e, # of 26 closures) rather than process may leave counselors feeling disempowered and unappreciated and may, ultimately, result in decreased work performance.

As a case in point, continuance commitment has been linked with relatively poor performance. In the national sample, conscientiousness was negatively correlated with continuance commitment. Those counselors reporting higher levels of *have to* commitment also reported lower levels of conscientiousness. This may also be reflected in attendance and punctuality. Counselors agreeing that they were absent or tardy showed lower levels of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment.

SUMMARY

Vermont's rehabilitation counselors showed patterns of job satisfaction and organizational commitment similar to rehabilitation counselors in the larger, national sample. Vermont's public rehabilitation agency is encouraged to develop ways of rewarding those counselor behaviors (conscientiousness, initiative, and cooperation) which are most predictive of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment.

APPENDIX A

JOB SATISFACTION ITEMS

On my present job, this is how I feel about:

1. Being able to keep busy all the time
2. The chance to work alone on the job
3. The chance to do different things from time to time
4. The chance to be "somebody" in the community
5. The way my boss handles his/her workers
6. The competence of my supervisor in making decisions
7. Being able to do things that do not go against my decisions*
8. The way my job provides for steady employment
9. the chance to do things for other people
10. The chance to tell people what to do*
11. The way company policies are put into practice
12. My pay and the amount of work I do
13. The chances for advancement on the job
14. The freedom to use my own judgement
15. The working conditions
16. The way my co-workers get along with each other
17. The praise I get for doing a good job
18. The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job

*Deleted from final analysis

APPENDIX B

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT ITEMS

Affective Commitment

I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this agency

I enjoy discussing my agency with people outside of it

I really feel as if this agency's problems are my own

I think I could easily become as attached to another agency as I am to this one (Reversed)

I do not feel like "part of the family" at my agency (Reversed)

I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this agency (Reversed)

This agency has a great deal of personal meaning for me

I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my agency (Reversed)

Normative Commitment

I think that people these days move from company to company too often

I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization (Reversed)

Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me (Reversed)

One of the major reasons I continue to work for this agency is that I believe loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain

If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere, I would not feel it was right to leave my agency

I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization

Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers

I do not think that wanting to be a "company man" or "company woman" is sensible anymore (Reversed)

Continuance Commitment

I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one line up (Reversed)

It would be very hard for me to leave my agency right now, even if I wanted to

Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my agency right now

It would not be too costly for me to leave my agency in the near future (Reversed)

Right now, staying with my agency is a matter of necessity as much as desire

I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving my agency

One of the few negative consequences of leaving this agency would be the scarcity of available alternatives

One of the major reasons why I continue to work for this agency is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice-another organization may not match the overall benefits here

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